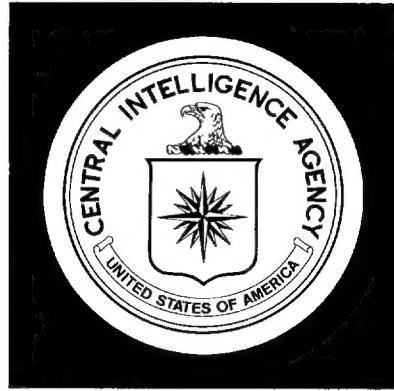


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# Intelligence Memorandum

*Unrest in China*

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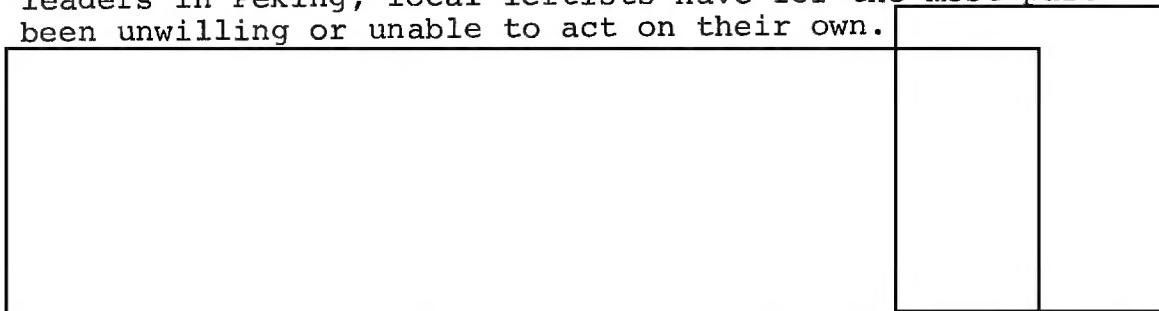


January 14, 1977

## Unrest in China

Political factionalism and occasional outbreaks of armed conflict have been a prominent part of the Chinese scene since the Cultural Revolution began in 1966. The severity of these disorders has varied with the political situation in Peking. Disturbances generally have been greater during nationwide political campaigns, such as the anti-Confucius campaign in 1974 and the criticism of former vice premier Teng Hsiao-ping last year. Western press accounts notwithstanding, there has been less, not more disruption since the arrest last October of the "gang of four," the leading leftists on the Politburo. In fact, the situation at the local levels may be calmer now than at any time in the past decade.

The main reason for this is that the "gang of four" themselves had been the major instigators of conflict at the local levels. Deprived of support from national leaders in Peking, local leftists have for the most part been unwilling or unable to act on their own.



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The Western press has erred in treating Chinese accounts of the past activities of the leftists as a description of the current situation. To our knowledge, there was only one attempt to organize open local resistance to the arrests of the leftists last October.

*This memorandum was prepared by the Office of Regional and Political Analysis.*

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It occurred in Shanghai, long a leftist bastion and the home of three of the four leaders concerned.

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Subsequently, Peking has on three occasions resorted to some military intervention in order to restore order at local levels. These episodes have been the object of considerable recent attention in the Western press, but in all three cases, the unrest had developed well before the fall of the senior leftists.

#### Fukien Province

Factionalism in this coastal province, stemming from the Cultural Revolution and aggravated by the heavy-handed methods of the provincial party boss in eliminating local leftists, has been a problem for several years. Local military troops have been used in Fukien

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Certain areas of Fukien apparently remain trouble spots as local leftists continue activities such as wall poster attacks on local officials. We are not aware of any armed clashes in Fukien following the military's intervention. In short, the situation there did not seem to worsen after the fall of the leading leftists. On the contrary, their arrests have allowed Peking to take more decisive action in resolving the situation.

#### Railway Problems

In a well-publicized move in December, Peking sent an official of the national military apparatus to take over the leadership of a much troubled railway bureau in Chengchou in central China. This railway bureau had been a problem for Peking since at least early last summer. At that time, the unit, in a surprising show

of defiance, used wall posters to attack a Peking directive ordering the cessation of factional disruption in railway work. Again in this instance, the fall of the leftists did not aggravate the situation, but enabled Peking to take action to restore order and remove the troublemakers.

Paoting

Of all the areas of leftist-inspired unrest mentioned in the Chinese media, Paoting, a city near Peking, seems to have been the only place where unrest actually intensified after the fall of the Peking leftists. Paoting had been a hot spot

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officials have described the current situation there and elsewhere in China as calm.

The Paoting situation points to another and especially delicate problem for Peking--how to deal with those senior military officers who were aligned with the leftists or who were in general sympathy with them. Although the great majority of the military leadership at regional and provincial levels appears to be very much in the corner of the new leadership, the allegiance of at least one military regional commander is questionable. Politburo member and commander of the Shenyang Military Region Li Te-sheng seemed to be especially vociferous in his attacks last year on former vice premier Teng Hsiao-ping. The propaganda emanating from that region and from the area where he previously served was harsher than other attacks on Teng, and party chairman Hua Kuo-feng indicated immediately after the fall of the senior leftists that Li's province deserved Peking's attention.

The leadership will probably move cautiously on this problem in order to avoid refueling factional fires.

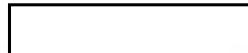
Although the case of Li Te-sheng may now be under investigation in Peking, no action is likely until the leadership is confident that the matter can be resolved with the minimum of disruption.

The Military's Role in "Rectification"

The former left-wing affiliations of a few senior officers, awkward though they may be for Peking, have not prevented the military from assuming a leading role in the campaign to identify and punish local followers of "the gang of four." One of the more important aspects of Peking's efforts to eliminate leftist factionalism was the publicity given to the use of military troops, either through radio broadcasts or the circulation of official directives. The rest of China is consequently now fully aware of Peking's recent use of military muscle. The message is clear to other areas that Peking stands ready to use troops when the situation warrants. This has been an effective deterrent to local leftists throughout China.

There may in fact be some disagreement between civilian elements of the leadership and the military in Peking over how far to push the campaign against local leftists. Civilians appear to be arguing for a lenient approach while the military seems to favor a more sweeping campaign that calls not only for criticism of local leftists but punishment as well. Although the "rectification" process is just getting under way, it appears now that the military is having its way. A broad campaign carries with it the potential for unrest at local levels, especially if the leftists feel they will be harshly treated in any case and will have nothing to lose by resisting. Many of the local ringleaders, however, have already come under attack and may be in custody. Without patrons at the national level or local leaders, leftists will be hard pressed to organize effective resistance.

The more important thing is that Peking has shown the rest of the nation that the military can be relied upon to put down leftist disruptions. This should prevent major unrest. The coming "rectification" campaign --a housecleaning of local administrative organs that will probably result in the removal from office of many lower level leftist officials--presents Peking with an



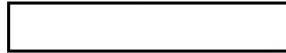
opportunity to sharply reduce, if not totally end, local factionalism.

Problems Persist as Factionalism Recedes

This is not to say that all will be calm throughout China. After the completion of the purge of local leftists, Peking will still be faced over the longer term with ideological differences at the provincial level. The leftist ideology represented by the "gang of four" has a constituency throughout the country, and the removal of disruptive leftists will not signal the end of disputes at the local level over how best to implement policies established by Peking. Moreover, as pressures mount from younger party members for a larger share in local administration, the question of who should implement these policies will become an area of contention. This is likely to plague China indefinitely given the traditional Chinese reluctance to assign younger people to positions of responsibility. Nevertheless, the passing of Mao and with him the periodic nationwide campaigns that encouraged open conflict, together with the emergence of a more united leadership committed to stability, order, and long-term economic modernization, rule out factional disorders of the magnitude that characterized the previous ten years.

A more likely source of friction in the future at the local level will be the new leadership's approach to economic development. The expected heavier reliance on economic incentives to boost production could result in a spiral of rising expectations that Peking will not be able to meet. Strikes for higher wages have been a periodic problem for several years, and the clamor for more and better creature comforts can be expected to become a growing problem for Peking.

In short, China's fundamental ideological, generational, and economic problems will persist and become more prominent as the political factionalism of the Mao era recedes. But post-Mao conflict over policy issues in these areas promises to be less explosive and divisive than the open political warfare of the past decade. That China held together throughout this period--and especially that it survived the near civil war conditions of the Cultural Revolution intact--is evidence of the strong cultural and nationalistic forces that have kept China one nation for centuries and will continue to do so in the future.



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